

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Miller Town Hall

AND/OR COMMON

Old Miller Fire Station #7

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Intersection of Miller Ave., Old Hobart  
Road, Grand Boulevard

CITY, TOWN  
Gary

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE  
Indiana

— VICINITY OF  
CODE  
018

COUNTY  
Lake

CODE  
089

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

☐ DISTRICT  
☒ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

☒ PUBLIC  
☐ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

☐ YES: RESTRICTED  
☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

**PRESENT USE**

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM  
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☒ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

City of Gary

STREET & NUMBER

401 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Gary

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

Lake County Governmental Complex

CITY, TOWN

Crown Point

STATE

Indiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

## 7-DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Miller Town Hall is located on a triangular shaped lot formed by the intersection of Miller Avenue, Old Hobart Road, and Grant Boulevard in Gary, Indiana. The structure is a rectangular two-story brick structure constructed in 1911.

The main portion of the structure measures forty feet by twenty-four feet. The front elevation (south) has three bays with an entry in the center bay. The double-hung windows on this, the north, and east sides have two over two lights. Windows on the west side have one over one light. The main entry has double paneled wooden doors, a plain transom, and a flat limestone hood supported by brackets. Above the entry is a limestone plaque with the words, "Town of Miller."

The second story windows have plain brick molded surrounds and limestone sills. A limestone string course runs below the first floor windows while a brick string runs above the second story windows. Above this string course is a metal parapet entablature with dentils. Projecting brick bands run around the structure on the first story.

The kitchen addition on the west side is one story brick structure on a raised basement. On the south side there is a double set of double-hung windows with three lights over one. The two single windows on the east side also have three lights over one. The kitchen is about eighteen by twelve feet.

The kitchen and hose tower were added in the 1920's when the building was converted from a town hall to a fire station. The hose tower is brick and measures nine by six feet and rises to a height of twenty-eight feet. On the west side a large fire door was placed in the west wall. In 1976 this door was removed and the three bay facade was restored.

The only interior feature of note is a pressed tin ceiling in the large meeting room on the second floor. In the 1940's a small wooden dispatcher's office was added to the north side. In 1976 this addition was removed.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1911

BUILDER/ARCHITECT J. J. Ver Plank

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Miller Town Hall is significant locally for its role in the development of Gary, Indiana.

The Town of Miller was established long before the Gary steel mills started to alter the landscape of Northern Lake County. A small village developed in 1874 at the point where the Michigan Southern and Baltimore & Ohio Railroads crossed near Lake Michigan. The settlement was named Miller after the Railroad foreman who supervised construction at the stop. In the late nineteenth century the town's economy was based on fishing and supplying ice to Chicago.

This quiet existence was disrupted in 1906 when the United States Steel Corporation turned a deserted area into the largest steel region in the country. Miller consisted of 9 square miles and had a population of 700 in 1907 when the boom town of Gary was incorporated. Gary early threatened to annex the town of Miller. It may be that the voters of Miller were demonstrating their independence when they voted 58 to 0 on June 3, 1910, to construct an electric lighting system building and meeting hall.

Town officials selected J. J. Ver Plank as the architect. Born in 1875, Ver Plank had opened an office in Gary in March, 1908, well aware of the opportunities available for an architect in a newly created city. He designed a number of structures in the area, including the Gary Theatre, First Presbyterian Church, Gary Commercial Club Building, and the Savage Building.

On September 13, 1910, the Town Board voted to accept plans for the building prepared by Ver Plank and electric lighting system specifications drawn up by George F. Peterson. To fund the project, the Board voted on October 7 to issue bonds in the amount of \$12,000 and to award the construction contract to Wilber Cross.

The completed structure was finished in April, 1911, and housed the electrical system equipment on the first floor, and a meeting hall was on the second floor. In addition to serving as a town hall, the building was used for dances, box socials, and a meeting place for civic and community organizations and the town board.

The residents of Gary became interested in Miller in 1910; seeking relief from the city summer heat, many people came to enjoy the beaches. The City of Gary wanted a park in the area; however, Hobart Township was not about to pay for a park which would benefit only Gary. In 1913 the people of Miller refused to lease land to the Gary Park Board, and in 1915 they opposed an attempt to set up a joint park board.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

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Gary sought to settle the matter of the park by annexing Miller in December, 1918. According to local tradition, the annexation was successful because many of the Miller men were gone, serving in World War I. The park question was finally resolved in 1919 when U.S. Steel purchased 120 acres along Lake Michigan and gave it to the City. The annexation caused the construction of streets between Gary and Miller and encouraged growth of the urban area in that direction.

In the 1920's the Miller Town Hall was converted to Gary Fire Station #7. The structure continued as a fire station until 1975 when it was converted to a local community center.

Because most of Gary was constructed after 1920, the architectural heritage of the area is much younger than other cities in Indiana. The Miller Town Hall is significant locally as one of the oldest brick structures in Miller and Gary. However, the structure is more significant locally as a reminder of Miller's brief period of independent existence.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gary Post-Tribune, "Jubilee Edition," June 3, 1956.  
"History of Miller", Esther Pearson, Tape in Gary Public Library  
Howat, William F., Standard History of Lake County, Indiana and the Calumet Region.  
Lewis Publishing Co.: Chicago & New York, 1915  
Town of Miller Board of Trustees Minutes, Volume 1, located in Gary City Hall  
Moore, Powell A. The Calumet Region, Indiana's Last Frontiers. Indianapolis: Indiana  
Historical Bureau, 1959

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 478220 46105250  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
C         

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
D         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard N. Hagelberg, Monitor

ORGANIZATION

Community Development Program

DATE

December 15, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

401 Broadway

TELEPHONE

219-882-0131

CITY OR TOWN

Gary

STATE

Indiana 46402

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 2-13-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

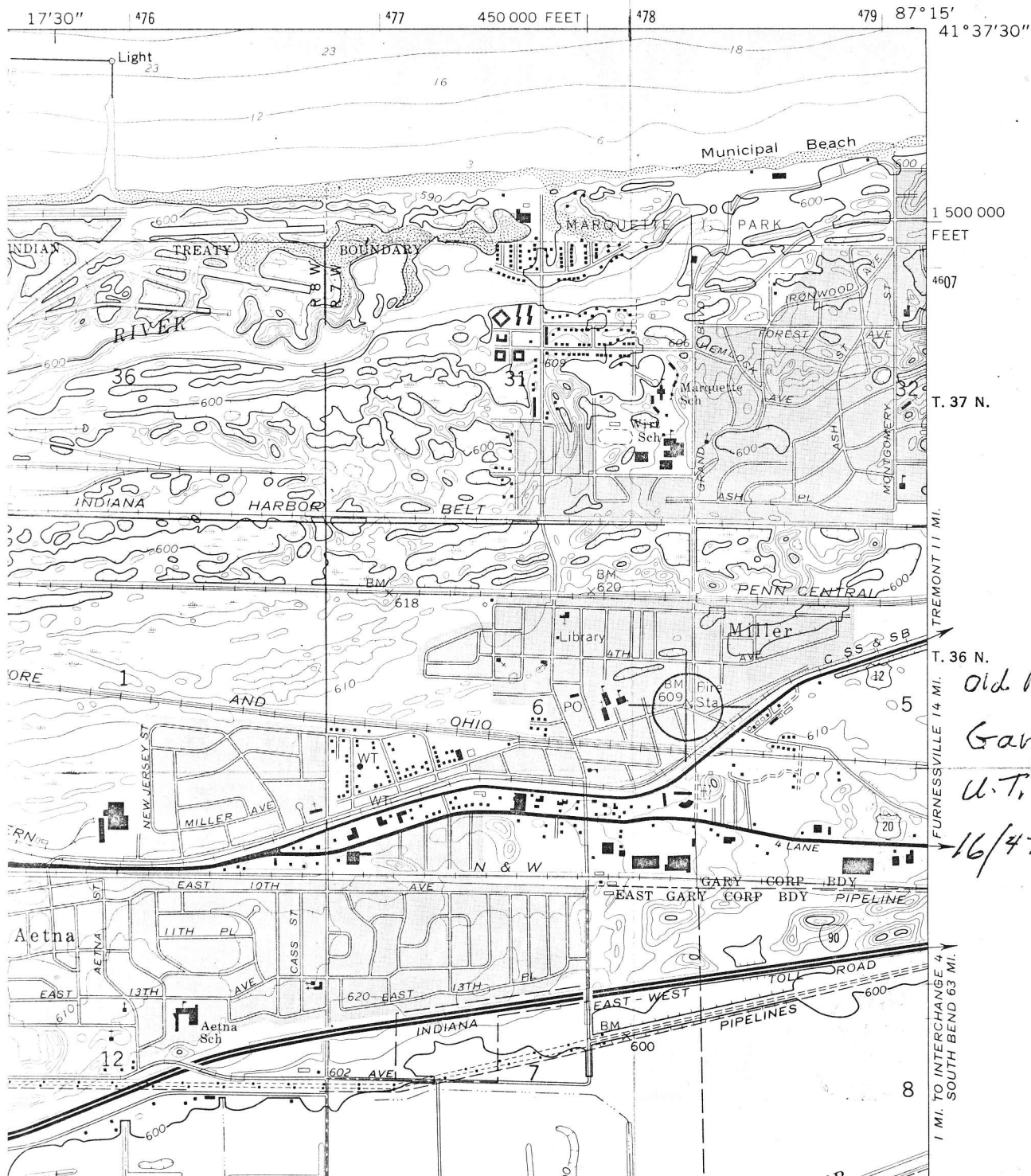
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

SOURCES

GARY QUADRANGLE  
INDIANA-LAKE CO  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
SE/4 TOLLESTON 15' QUADRANGLE



old Miller Town Hall  
Gary, Indiana  
U.T.M. Reference  
16/478220/460250